

Report to: **Audit, Best Value & Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **6 September 2013**

By: **Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Community Services**

Title of report: **Overview of Library and Information Services**

Purpose of report: **To provide the Committee with an overview of what the Library and Information Services does and how the Service is planning for the future**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to note and comment on the report.

1. Financial implications

1.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

2. Key objective

2.1 The key objective for the Library and Information Service is to develop a high quality library service which promotes reading and lifelong learning, and provides access to information and council services. The service is committed to providing excellent services to the people of East Sussex – being customer focussed, cost-effective and responding to the changing needs of our County.

3. What we do

3.1 The Library and Information Service offers lending, reference and information services, including newspapers and magazines, and local studies information, to anyone living, studying or working in East Sussex.

3.2 We provide free access to computers (and have 250 available across the county), the Internet and a range of applications at our static libraries. In addition to lending books and e-books, we also lend DVDs, story tapes and CDs for a charge.

3.3 We operate two mobile libraries, providing a range of library services and a mobile office which delivers access to council services, learning opportunities and access to ICT facilities in remote areas.

3.4 Accredited online learning including literacy, numeracy and ICT is provided from libraries in Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Newhaven and Peacehaven, as well as Egerton Park Children's Centre.

3.5 Electronic access to our services, including the facilities to reserve and renew resources online and to access online reference resources such as encyclopaedia, is available through our comprehensive web-pages at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/libraries. We offer a database of community information at www.escis.org.uk. People can follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/eastsussexlibraries> and view our collection of historical images at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/escchistoricalpics/>.

3.6 The Equal Access Service delivers a volunteer service to housebound customers and carers throughout the county, provides audio books free of charge to visually impaired readers and delivers reading and reminiscence resources to people in care.

3.7 The Schools Library and Museum Service provides resources and advice for schools and school librarians. This includes the loan of books and artefacts ranging from Roman coins to an entire Victorian kitchen. Schools can also have advice on the management of their school library. The service operates on a trading basis with income of approximately £400,000 per annum.

3.8 We provide library and information services at HMP Lewes.

3.9 In the past three years, we have continued to develop our ethos of libraries as bright, friendly, neutral places where people want to spend time, opening new libraries in Rye and Wadhurst, significantly refurbishing and extending Forest Row Library and refurbishing the first floor of Bexhill Library to match the style and colour scheme of the ground floor. We continue to roll out self-service options for customers and now offer self-service in nine libraries.

3.10 We have over 450 volunteers in various roles ranging from computer buddies to help people go online to volunteers who promote reading and literacy by helping with the Summer Reading Challenge for children. We're working in partnership to help people with digital inclusion and the changes coming in terms of welfare reform and universal credit. See **Appendix One** for some key statistics.

4. Planning

4.1 Planning for the next three years will be informed by a number of factors including:

- Council priorities
- Views of residents as expressed in recent consultation and surveys
- Reviews of the service which have been carried out in the past year, including the Library and Information Service Review 2012, and the reviews currently being carried out of mobile services, services in rural areas and services in the Eastbourne area.
- The unique make up of our county.

4.2 There are three key targets which will feature in our medium term planning:

1. Ensuring libraries are at the heart of communities and the first point of contact by:

- Providing new libraries with increased facilities – in Seaford, Newhaven and Hastings
- Increasing the number of Community Help Points
- increasing access to a wider range of public services
- Ensuring libraries support and promote the work of the County Council
- Working with partners to improve services to the community.

2. Enabling people to develop their potential and improve their life chances through:

- Access to lifelong learning and skills, including employability
- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Supporting literacy
- Providing access to information and advice
- Providing access to and guidance on using digital services
- Developing volunteering opportunities.

3. Working more effectively with reduced resources by:

- Developing choice for customers in the way they access services
- Providing more self-service facilities

- Using technology to work more effectively and efficiently
- More efficient use of buildings e.g. out of hours, review of opening hours
- Targeting services to reflect the need of the local population e.g. focus on areas of deprivation.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Committee is recommended to note and comment on the report.

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Local Member: All

Background Documents

None

Key statistics 2012/13

Revenue expenditure

£7,294,173

Main areas of expenditure

Stock fund	£933,170 (13% of gross budget)
Staffing	£4,325,624 (60% of gross budget)
Premises	£971,336 (13% of gross budget)

- Loaned over 2.4 million items
- More than 2.3 million visits to libraries
- Over 1.1 million visitor sessions and 10,000,000 page views on ESCIS, our online community information service
- In our nine libraries with self-service facilities, approximately 70% of transactions were by customers self-serving
- WiFi available in six libraries, by March 2013 there were over 300 WiFi sessions being carried out per month by customers
- 8,997 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge
- 218,428 hours of usage during 314,774 sessions by customers on our 252 computers with internet access across the county
- Over 450 volunteers helped us to deliver services to housebound people, to support people to go online, to help with book sales, to support children through the Summer Reading Challenge and carry out other valuable work.

